

Message Text

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EA - MR. MILLER (SUBS)

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P 161716Z OCT 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CASC, TH, US

SUBJECT: INTEREST IN AMCIT DIDI PANSAK

1. BOTH WASHINGTON POST AND NYT OF OCT 16 CONTAIN PROMINENT ARTICLES ON OCT 14 PREVENTION OF DEPARTURE FROM THAILAND OF PANSAK VINYARATN AND HIS AMCIT WIFE DIDI AND CHILDREN, AS WELL AS PANSAK'S SUBSEQUENT ARREST. SIMONS ARTICLE STATES MRS. PANSAK "HAS DISCUSSED THE ARREST WITH US CONSULAR OFFICIALS, BUT WAS TOLD THAT THE EMBASSY HAS NO CURRENT PLANS TO PROTEST BECAUSE TO DO SO 'WOULD BE TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF A SOVEREIGN NATION'". SIMONS ARTICLE STATES WIFE AND CHILDREN'S US PASSPORTS WERE STAMPED BY THAI AUTHORITIES TO PREVENT DEPARTURE FROM THAILAND. NYT VERSION IS THAT THEIR PASSPORTS WERE "SEIZED".

2. OCT 15 TIME INC. EXECUTIVE BARRY ZORTHIAN CALLED
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DEPUTY ASST SEC MILLER ON CASE IN BEHALF OF MRS. PANSAK'S

FORMER HUSBAND, JOHN MILLINGTON. LATER SAME DAY HELBLE DISCUSSED CASE WITH MILLINGTON. THE LATTER HAD HAD SEVERAL PHONE CONVERSATIONS WITH HIS FORMER WIFE, AND HAD

THE IMPRESSION SHE WAS WELL. HE STATED THAT IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT DIDI WAS NOT RPT NOT INTERESTED IN LEAVING THAILAND WITHOUT PANSAK. HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THAT IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE USG TO BECOME INVOLVED IN PANSAK'S CASE, GIVEN HIS THAI NATIONALITY. HELBLE ASSURED MILLINGTON THE CONSULATE STOOD READY TO PROVIDE CUSTOMARY CONSULAR ASSISTANCE TO DIDI AND AMCIT CHILDREN SHOULD SUCH ASSISTANCE BE REQUESTED. MILLINGTON EXPRESSED DEEP APPRECIATION FOR THE EMBASSY'S AND DEPARTMENT'S CONCERN/ASSISTANCE, AND DID NOT REQUEST FURTHER ACTION AT THIS TIME.

3. FOLLOWING IS THE DEPARTMENT'S CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE ON THE CASE.

QUESTION: THE PRESS REPORTS THAT THE AMERICAN CITIZEN WIFE OF A THAI PUBLISHER ALONG WITH HER TWO CHILDREN WAS PREVENTED FROM LEAVING THAILAND WHEN HER HUSBAND WAS BEING DETAINED BY THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT THERE. AN AMERICAN CONSULAR OFFICER IS ALSO QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THIS IS AN INTERNAL MATTER FOR THE THAI. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE STORY AND WHY ISN'T THE AMERICAN EMBASSY LOOKING AFTER ITS CITIZENS THERE?

ANSWER: WE HAVE BEEN AWARE OF THE MATTER FOR A NUMBER OF DAYS. OUR CONSUL WAS IN TOUCH EARLIER THIS WEEK WITH MRS. PANSAK AND REPORTED THAT SHE AND HER CHILDREN ARE WELL AND FREE. (HER HUSBAND, A THAI NATIONAL, IS REPORTEDLY BEING HELD BY THE THAI GOVERNMENT). WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT SHE HAS SOUGHT ANY HELP IN LEAVING THE COUNTRY. WE WILL, OF COURSE, CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH HER AND ENSURE THAT HER WELFARE IS BEING PROTECTED.

QUESTION: HOW DOES THE DEPARTMENT FEEL ABOUT THIS REPORTED ROUNDUP OF INTELLECTUALS IN THAILAND?

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ANSWER: OUR TRADITIONS AND BELIEFS IN MATTERS OF THIS TYPE ARE A WELL KNOWN MATTER OF RECORD. HABIB

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